

TS 770231

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17 October 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, NFAC

VIA : Production Board

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FROM :

SUBJECT : Presidential Briefing Items

1. I propose the following subjects for major Presidential briefing items:

18 October: LDC Development, five countries (working).

26 October: Discuss Western European dependence on imports from Africa and US/USSR Strategic Forces NIE 11-3-8.

1 November: Nuclear proliferation status of all countries President will visit in November.

8 November: India Estimate (to this date)....

15 November: Brazil Estimate working to this

21 November:  
or first brief  
after President's  
trip: Tactical Air Balance in Europe.

2. Attached is a concept paper and outline for a Tactical Air Balance paper. This is a crude example of what I think you should give the Director 4-5 weeks before each briefing.

Attachments:  
As Stated Above

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

CONCEPT PAPER ON THE TACTICAL AIR BALANCE IN CENTRAL EUROPE

NATO's tactical air forces have been regarded as a major obstacle to a Warsaw Pact invasion of West Germany. NATO's qualitative lead in aircraft was judged to more than balance the Pact's greater numbers. But the Pact has been pushing modernization for the last ten years so the qualitative gap is narrowing.

Illuminating the implications of this change will be a major purpose of the briefing. There are several different views on the issue and our understanding of what aspects are important in determining the balance is imperfect. One goal of the briefing, therefore, is to show the President clearly the degree of our knowledge and the range of perceptions that exist.

We can offer a unique intelligence insight into the balance question because we know how the Soviets evaluate our and their aircraft. This allows us to say, "At least crudely, here is how the balance probably looks to the Russians over time." We can also project future air forces (e.g. use SECDEF's FYDP and the JSOP for US forces and our estimates of Allied and Pact forces) to give insight into how the balance will look in the future.

Our analysis may conclude that the Soviets view the air picture as having changed to one that favors the Pact. But they are probably also concerned about the prospect of a major qualitative leap forward by NATO if the US' allies, who constitute the bulk of NATO's air forces, replace obsolescent aircraft with aircraft like F-15s and F-16s. The Soviets regard these aircraft as superior to any Pact aircraft. Further, we see nothing under development in the USSR which would match them qualitatively.

Attached is the outline of the paper which would be prepared to be given to the President at the briefing.

Attachment

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

Briefing Outline

- I. Role of Tactical Air Power in the Context of The Overall Military Balance in Central Europe
- II. Size and Composition of NATO and Pact Tactical Air Forces Intended for Use in Central Europe
- III. Nature of Pact Modernization
  - Priorities
  - Motivations
- IV. Effect of Modernization on Combat Effectiveness
  - Relative Pact-NATO Capabilities to Deliver Ordnance (1970-80)
  - Relative Capabilities to Deliver Ordnance in Adverse Weather (1970-80)
  - Soviet Perceptions of Relative Combat Effectiveness of NATO-Pact Air Forces
- V. Continuing Qualitative Differences
  - Avionics
  - Training
  - Munitions
  - Flexibility of Employment
- VI. Prospects for Further Changes, 1980-85
  - Pact
  - NATO
  - Soviet Perceptions of Future Likely Changes

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